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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 005527

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: HAMZA MANSOUR AND THE IAF/MB: MODERATE LEADERSHIP  
STRETCHED BETWEEN ITS FOLLOWING AND THE GOJ

REF: AMMAN 04236

Classified By: AMBASSADOR EDWARD W. GNEHM. REASONS: 1.5 (b) and (d).

1 (C) SUMMARY. Since his July 17 meeting with R Special Coordinator Christopher Ross (reftel), Islamic Action Front Secretary General Sheikh Hamza Mansour has endured harsh

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criticism from those in and around the IAF/Muslim Brotherhood for "speaking with the enemy." Mansour's recent appearances and press interviews, combined with information from embassy sources, indicate that he is making an effort to remain in line (at least publicly) with the more radical views of the rank and file MB membership. His position appears to be representative of the MB leadership's increasingly uncomfortable relationship with the more militant MB membership. There are also rumors of a power struggle within the "moderate" leadership of the MB, and Mansour may be attempting to assure his internal leadership position by maintaining his support from the rank and file. END SUMMARY.

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FALLOUT FROM MEETING WITH ROSS  
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12. (C) On July 17 Ambassador Ross met with Mansour and two other Islamic Action Front leaders (reftel). In recent memory, Mansour has been the only member of the IAF leadership to meet with embassy officials. Despite his public invectives against the USG, Mansour has consistently affirmed the value of dialogue between the USG and the MB. In the face of harsh criticism in the local media by MB commentators, Mansour has been publicly unapologetic for "meeting with the enemy behind the back of the GOJ."

13. (C) Notwithstanding his defense of the July 17 meeting with USG officials, Mansour spoke at a rally at the MB center in early August. According to London based Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, Mansour told the crowd that the "operation" (i.e. suicide bombing) against the Hebrew University (which killed eight, including four AMCITS) cost USD 50,000 and that such large costs necessitate giving large financial aid to the Palestinian people to carry out similar operations in the future. (Note: The article did not directly quote Mansour, but paraphrased him. Post has had no contact with Mansour since his July 17 meeting with Ambassador Ross, and has therefore not been able to express outrage at such comments directly or get his version of what was actually said).

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"MANSOUR DIDN'T MEAN IT"  
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14. (C) On August 18, poloff met with Ibrahim Gharaibeh (strictly protect) an East Banker and former member of the MB. Gharaibeh, currently in a master's degree program that focuses on elderly care, said that he left the MB because it "stopped focusing on charity and became a movement purely concerned with politics." According to Gharaibeh, the MB leadership is "very smart, and wiser than its following," and is pursuing a (comment: relatively) moderate course on domestic and foreign politics. Gharaibeh said that, within the leadership, Mansour is more moderate than most. In order to keep his support among the ranks of the MB however, he makes speeches "on a hot level," that feed the rank and file's appetite for invective against the USG. In the end, according to Gharaibeh, Mansour "doesn't always mean" what he is saying publicly. "If the moderate leaders spoke their true thoughts to the average MB member, they would be burned," Gharaibeh said.

15. (C) Gharaibeh said the current MB leadership has adopted short-term strategies to maintain control of the organization in the face of formidable extremist sentiment within the MB. Privately, moderates are debating the merits and morality of suicide bombings. Publicly, they are lambasting the USG and supporting "martyrdom" operations against Israel. While Gharaibeh does not believe that the moderates, as a group, are in serious danger of losing control of the MB, he does believe that some "moderates" are tarring others with the pro-USG brush in an attempt to gain rank and file support. This, he says, is the kind of dynamic that creates an environment in which Mansour publicly praises the Hebrew University attack.

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MB LEADERSHIP'S LONG-STANDING COOPERATION  
WITH GOJ BECOMING TOO HEAVY A BURDEN?  
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16. (C) On September 22 poloff met with human rights advocate Sa'eda Kilani. (Note: although Kilani is a human rights advocate, her family is well-connected within the judiciary and security services here). Kilani's commentary on Mansour echoed that of Gharaibeh's. "The IAF and MB leadership have cooperated with the government regarding extremists, such as Ba'athists and communists, for decades, but the (IAF/MB) leadership is stressed right now."  
17. (C) One root cause of this "stress" Kilani noted, is the lack of channels through which the MB leadership can get out its message. "Right now, the only political organizations left are the professional associations," Kilani said, "and that is not enough. The opposition are left more frustrated and are losing faith in their leaders."

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COMMENT  
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18. (C) The MB leadership's inner-workings are not always easy to understand, but the recent activity by Mansour seems to indicate that the "moderate" leadership of the MB/IAF is, at the least, having difficulty managing its increasingly frustrated following.  
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